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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
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alabama business

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The Center for Business and Economic Research: Alabama's Data Repository

A business considering moving into an area needs a profile of the economic and demographic characteristics of the area. A state agency needs to know the impact of proposed legislation on tax collections. A letter, telephone call, or personal visit to the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at The University of Alabama can often provide the needed information.

Housed in the College of Commerce and Business Administration, CBER is a major repository for business, economic, and demographic data for the State of Alabama and the region. Established in 1930 (as the Bureau of Business Research), CBER has served as a central reservoir of information and statistics relating to the Alabama economy and has engaged in research programs to measure and promote economic development within the State.

Over the years, the faces and the methods have changed. However, the Center's original statement of purpose—to make information available to the citizens of Alabama—is still its primary function.

Acquisition and Maintenance

CBER maintains comprehensive data bases of economic and demographic information on the State and its counties. These include detailed labor force information as well as data reflecting activity in construction, finance, and other major sectors.

One extremely important data file is the retail trade data base, prepared in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Revenue. Each month approximately 50,000 records are processed in order to produce these data. Work is in progress to continue to improve the accuracy of this series. Also in the trade area, the Center has developed tabulations from U.S. Department of Commerce data giving detailed information on imports and exports by country and commodity for the Mobile Customs District.

CBER has also developed econometric models for the State of Alabama and for each of Alabama's twelve planning districts. Forecasts from these models provide users with the most detailed assessment of current economic conditions and outlook available for Alabama.

As the lead agency in the Alabama State Data Center U.S. Bureau of the Census program, CBER holds a large collection of federal, state and regional data. These include housing and population information from the 1980 Census Summary Tapes and other special federal tabulations. The Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce has also designated CBER as an agency entitled to computer tabulations, tapes, and microfiche reports of their work in employment and income estimation.

Dissemination

Beginning with The University of Alabama Business News in 1930, CBER has had a monthly data publication. The current publication, Alabama Business, presents selected data series and the analyses of those data. The publication is geared to those individuals interested in the Alabama economy.

A continuing project is the periodic publication of the Economic Abstract of Alabama, the most complete compendium of statistical data for the State. The next edition of this publication will be available in the Spring of 1987.

Forecasts from the State and regional models are used to produce annual documents. The most recent examples are 1986 Alabama Economic Outlook which examines Alabama's economy by industry with emphasis on output and employment and Planning Regions 1986 Economic Outlook which looks at the historical and forecasted trends for each of the State's twelve planning districts.

Special Studies

Using Census Bureau data, two new products were developed this year. Demographic profiles of all 751 zip code areas in Alabama were created using data from the 1980 Census of Population and Housing. The Center also reorganized Census files to correspond as closely as possible to Alabama's legislative districts to produce a three-page data summary for each House and Senate district.

CBER is designated the contact agency for the State of Alabama for population estimates and projections. A revised set of population projections for Alabama's counties through 2010 is in progress.

The Center also seeks contract research as well as originates independent research that provides insight into Alabama's economic outlook, its potential and its relationship to the region and nation. An example of this effort is a recent study funded by Sears, Roebuck and Company concerning the relationship between a state's tax structure and its economic growth.

Goal: Service

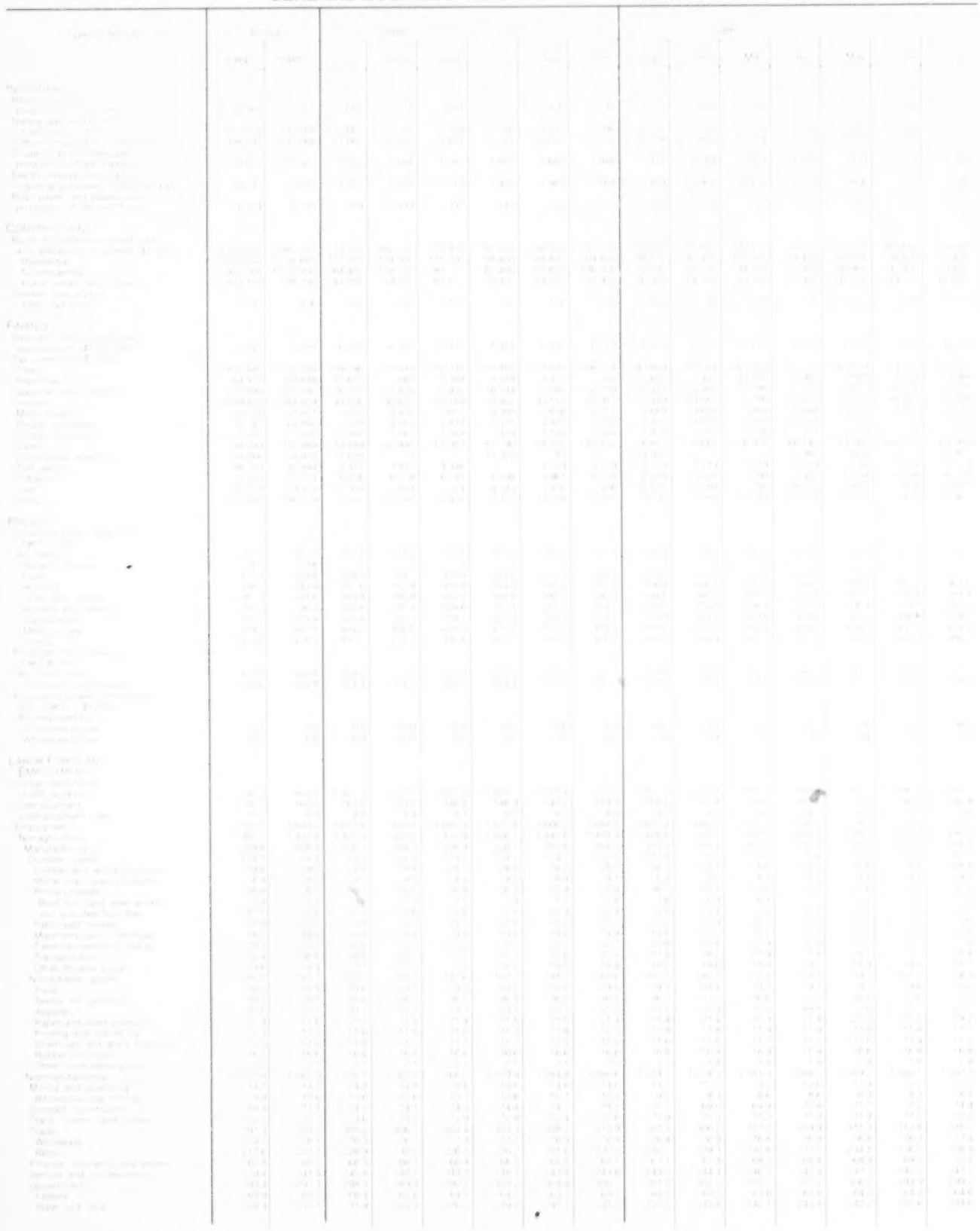
The activities of CBER [illegible] fall in the "general service" category. For example, in recent years the Center has been asked by the Alabama Legislature to provide projections of the Alabama Special Education Trust Fund receipts as a basis for planning the education budget. Another important service function is participating in the University's outreach program in the economic development area and in cooperative research programs with industry. This support has ranged from providing formal written reports with charts and graphs to verbal presentations.

Requests cover many topics and the scope and detail needed varies greatly. The most frequent general areas of interest are: income, employment, population, retail sales, educational attainment, building permits, and cost of living.

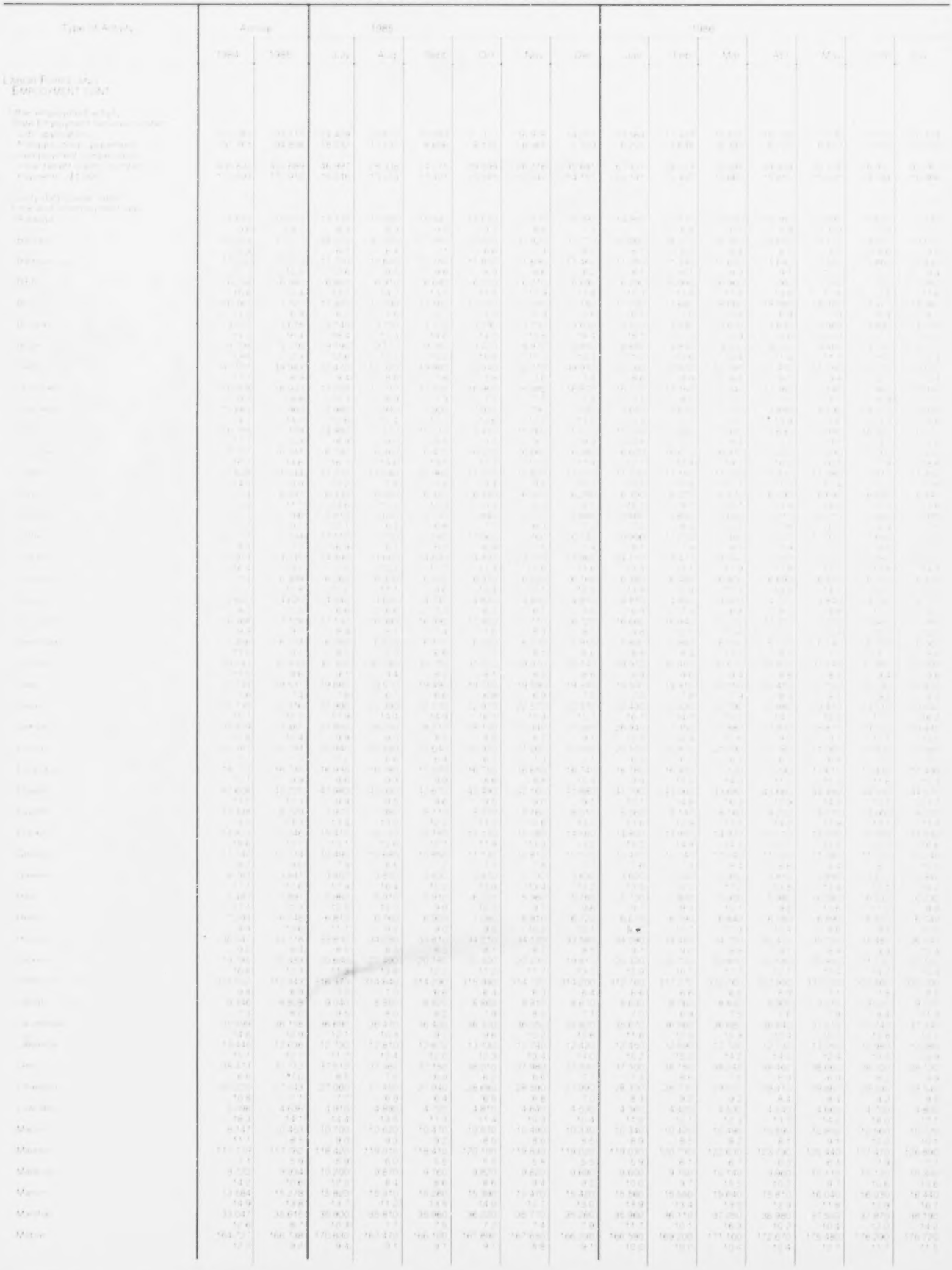
Whether responding to a youngster's request for "everything you have on Alabama" or assisting a local industrial development authority with data for a prospect, the Center for Business and Economic Research strives to provide the information desired.

—Deborah Hamilton

GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS FOR ALABAMA



GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS FOR ALABAMA



GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS FOR ALABAMA

Type of Activity	Annual		1985						1986						
	1984	1985	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT (ONE)															
County data (under 25K): Area and unemployment rate estimates															
Marion	11,196	10,987	9,850	9,810	9,960	9,810	9,960	9,880	9,900	9,970	10,000	9,930	9,930	9,810	9,790
	10.4	10.3	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.1	10.1
Montgomery	96,607	97,905	92,900	92,770	91,750	92,940	92,190	91,850	91,340	91,200	91,950	92,610	93,170	93,170	94,250
	6.1	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.9
Morgan	38,872	39,468	41,090	41,030	43,050	41,890	42,080	43,240	44,770	44,010	44,630	44,050	43,420	43,280	44,220
	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6
Perry	5,602	5,506	5,490	5,460	5,440	5,290	5,410	5,290	5,240	5,220	5,230	5,230	5,230	5,240	5,260
	14.1	14.2	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.4	13.7	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4
Pickens	7,080	6,960	7,190	7,060	7,150	7,060	7,080	6,970	6,740	6,660	6,670	6,810	6,880	6,910	6,970
	15.8	15.5	16.0	15.7	15.9	15.7	15.8	15.5	15.0	14.8	14.8	15.1	15.3	15.3	15.5
Pike	13,190	13,113	11,640	11,670	11,940	11,960	12,110	11,900	11,790	11,970	12,060	12,160	12,260	12,310	12,370
	8.1	8.1	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.6
Randolph	6,750	6,660	6,560	6,620	6,770	6,710	6,740	6,760	6,810	6,780	6,790	6,830	6,870	6,870	6,910
	14.9	14.7	14.4	14.6	14.9	14.8	14.8	14.9	15.0	14.9	14.9	15.0	15.1	15.1	15.2
Russell	14,093	15,634	15,840	15,850	15,980	15,940	15,980	15,940	15,940	15,960	15,980	16,000	16,020	16,040	16,110
	6.4	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.3
St. Clair	19,820	19,994	20,640	20,340	20,740	20,770	20,830	20,590	20,640	20,730	20,830	20,910	20,990	21,000	21,110
	9.1	9.1	9.4	9.3	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.6
Shelby	37,971	38,297	40,750	41,060	41,550	41,140	41,530	41,140	41,440	41,610	41,790	41,870	41,940	41,930	42,010
	5.1	5.1	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Sumter	6,194	6,147	6,210	6,150	6,190	6,240	6,150	5,830	5,960	6,050	6,140	6,240	6,330	6,340	6,370
	17.4	17.3	17.5	17.4	17.5	17.6	17.4	16.4	16.8	17.1	17.3	17.6	17.8	17.8	17.9
Talladega	31,153	31,937	31,710	32,050	31,930	31,480	31,980	31,890	30,870	31,080	31,760	32,160	32,440	32,580	32,810
	11.1	11.3	11.2	11.4	11.3	11.1	11.3	11.2	10.9	11.0	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.4	11.5
Tallapoosa	17,304	18,258	18,640	18,830	18,930	18,890	18,910	18,930	18,980	18,940	18,960	18,960	18,980	18,990	19,110
	9.4	9.9	10.1	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.3
Tuscaloosa	78,132	84,386	83,020	84,930	84,910	85,750	85,960	85,020	85,220	85,430	85,730	85,870	86,010	86,040	86,240
	9.1	9.8	9.6	9.8	9.8	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8
Walker	32,994	33,997	32,830	32,740	33,110	32,980	33,180	33,180	33,480	33,600	33,710	33,810	33,910	33,940	34,010
	13.1	13.6	13.1	13.1	13.2	13.2	13.2	13.2	13.3	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.5
Washington	6,341	6,808	6,630	6,670	6,840	6,820	6,870	6,860	6,880	6,900	6,930	6,950	6,960	6,970	6,990
	14.1	14.9	14.4	14.5	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
Wilcox	5,473	5,997	4,450	4,240	4,370	4,410	4,140	4,240	4,270	4,270	4,290	4,330	4,370	4,340	4,340
	16.1	16.1	13.5	13.0	13.4	13.5	12.7	13.0	13.2	13.2	13.3	13.4	13.5	13.4	13.4
Winston	10,264	10,488	10,700	10,540	10,630	10,640	10,610	10,540	10,630	10,670	10,700	10,740	10,760	10,760	10,790
	14.0	14.4	14.7	14.5	14.6	14.6	14.6	14.5	14.6	14.7	14.7	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.8
TRADE															
Foreign Trade Port of Mobile: Imports															
Value ($1,000)	726,362	774,466	76,111	76,473	68,740	86,823	81,648	53,984	58,252	70,963	80,027	68,570	62,834	82,412	
Shipping weight (1,000,000 lbs.)	9,484	13,402	1,278	1,630	1,606	882	1,056	676	984	1,347	1,332	1,304	1,276	1,549	
Exports															
Value ($1,000)	602,948	602,964	47,270	53,332	60,612	56,786	77,169	46,663	51,115	62,035	69,647	53,426	54,556	66,911	
Shipping weight (1,000,000 lbs.)	11,911	12,794	1,063	1,196	1,374	1,453	1,814	1,154	1,569	1,714	1,820	1,511	1,562	1,816	
Shipments by water Port of Mobile (1,000 tons)	38,791	38,342	4,228	3,866	3,412	3,134	3,716	3,128	3,511	3,634	3,917	3,729	3,631	3,967	3,413
Domestic															
Electric energy consumption (mil. kwh): Industrial purposes (1,000,000 kwh)	24,094	25,020	2,427	2,364	2,515	1,914	1,776	2,013	2,367	2,274	1,848	1,716	1,756	2,273	2,301
Gasoline sales (1,000 gallons)	1,905,267	1,941,469	166,023	166,208	154,938	160,749	159,060	162,477	164,132	147,107	163,267	176,844	171,643	166,984	
New passenger car registrations (number)	141,846	153,540	13,485	13,007	11,455	12,033	10,945	11,634	11,231	13,041	13,333	12,416	13,701	13,437	11,434
Taxable retail sales by kind of business, state total ($1,000):															
Food	3,630	3,422													
General, stores with food and gas	775	756													
General merchandise	2,379	2,329													
Apparel	564	631													
Furniture, furnishings, etc.	542	670													
Automotive	1,019	1,071													
Gasoline service stations	294	292													
Lumber and building materials	866	1,153													
Hardware and farm implements	427	264													
Eating places	1,784	1,915													
Drug stores	254	256													
All other retail	2,161	1,836													
Total sales by retail concerns	15,671	16,685													
Nonretail and unclassified concerns	2,679	2,870													
Total all sales at retail	18,364	19,525													
Taxable retail sales, Metropolitan Statistical Areas and counties ($1,000):															
MSAs															
Anniston	567,037	542,637	45,557	49,280	47,359	44,691	45,864	54,511	42,135	40,342	43,014	48,521	50,761		
Birmingham	5,020,295	5,366,787	442,418	472,850	452,379	441,556	446,494	528,691	427,637	409,788	402,306	474,870	491,318		
Dothan	641,532	667,194	56,739	57,448	55,851	56,339	53,003	65,796	51,734	50,327	49,210	56,820	61,205		
Florence	611,592	646,168	54,300	51,250	53,676	52,176	55,160	67,179	50,154	46,792	46,809	56,040	57,742		
Gadsden	458,793	475,670	40,989	42,727	39,466	38,575	39,447	45,925	35,766	34,174	34,251	41,410	40,944		
Huntsville	1,047,074	1,160,272	98,544	104,251	98,060	95,631	97,774	116,255	97,583	86,486	85,933	98,342	102,192		
Mobile	2,079,628	2,190,074	191,608	190,861	181,151	182,305	174,656	212,163	174,098	159,002	160,759	192,083	179,457		
Montgomery	1,427,914	1,510,004	128,930	129,446	126,693	121,981	122,599	153,297	116,196	114,048	122,278	133,869	134,077		
Tuscaloosa	630,169	674,642	56,543	58,531	56,543	55,957	56,662	67,990	55,200	50,901	50,129	60,216	57,496		
Counties															
Autauga	96,681	105,937	9,261	9,790	8,397	8,823	9,136	9,758	8,804	8,116	7,491	9,115	8,833		
Baldwin	343,603	359,444	34,638	32,210	28,238	26,552	25,637	30,317	25,633	25,200	27,256	31,712	31,847		
Barbour	71,569	75,348	6,572	6,396	6,249	6,265	6,120	7,651	5,826	5,772	5,880	6,413	6,340		
Bibb	41,388	44,116	3,538	3,924	3,910	3,670	3,906	4,429	3,478	3,446	3,843	4,025	4,302		
Blount	88,957	100,666	8,267	8,997	9,030	8,528	8,727	9,208	7,991	7,113	7,505	8,292	8,696		
Bullock	26,076	29,659	2,024	2,011	2,033	2,053	2,098	2,794	2,345	2,056	2,034	1,982	1,947		
Butler	65,540	63,137	5,164	5,222	5,182	5,142	5,100	5,956	5,133	4,682	5,010	5,187	4,973		
Calhoun	567,736	542,637	45,557	49,280	47,359	44,691	45,864	54,511	42,135	40,342	43,014	48,521	50,761		
Chambers	106,969	108,833	9,493	9,300	9,042	9,006	8,963	10,255	8,642	8,420	9,439	9,900	9,631		
Cherokee	47,882	50,326	4,637	4,246	4,459	4,404	3,937	4,139	4,286	3,671	3,486	4,720	4,487		
Chilton	99,835	109,585	8,908	9,566	9,102	8,985	9,304	10,471	8,412	8,457	8,801	9,354	10,506		
Choctaw	36,627	38,875	3,171	3,565	3,154	3,318	3,291	3,695	3,227	2,707	2,796	3,018	3,084		
Clarke	98,413	107,231	9,186	9,265	8,999	8,266	8,773	10,602	8,656	7,673	8,573	9,309	8,791		
Clay	26,354	26,979	2,210	2,349	2,216	2,215	2,116	2,470	2,354	2,129	2,120	2,393	2,424		
Cleburne	22,197	23,627	2,186	1,938	2,205	1,963	1,656	1,723	1,670	1,632	1,725	1,989	2,242		
Coffee	186,084	192,011	16,578	17,037	16,661	15,289	15,740	18,529	14,954	13,954	14,916	17,114	19,751		

GENERAL BUSINESS INDICATORS FOR ALABAMA

Type of Activity	Annual		1985						1986						
	1984	1985	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
TRADE CONSUMER															
Taxable (9% sales MSA incl)															
County (continued)															
Cullman	344,882	350,176	31,699	32,766	31,825	33,896	30,229	31,388	29,074	27,849	29,015	31,795	31,471		
Dadeville	37,486	36,944	3,252	3,443	3,267	3,645	3,260	3,526	2,844	2,543	2,557	2,762	2,943		
Dallas	8,919	10,204	876	967	777	990	813	914	867	686	767	838	847		
Dekalb	137,484	137,596	11,866	12,561	11,870	13,116	10,875	12,600	10,773	10,156	11,272	11,873	11,657		
Demopolis	40,945	38,358	3,177	3,305	3,135	3,494	2,636	3,259	2,855	2,443	3,002	3,042	3,528		
Dothan	287,385	291,432	25,492	24,139	23,333	26,774	20,897	24,863	19,684	17,730	19,720	23,327	24,745		
Elba	104,884	114,626	9,109	9,796	9,442	9,993	9,706	11,415	8,562	8,554	8,063	10,072	10,603		
Eufaula	148,889	157,950	11,622	18,694	11,215	16,663	11,275	19,496	15,744	14,834	15,997	17,502	17,507		
Fairhope	140,256	190,344	15,764	17,163	16,056	19,080	15,110	17,503	14,353	13,793	13,012	16,100	16,651		
Fayette	102,062	107,792	9,339	9,651	9,156	9,438	8,279	9,470	8,443	8,460	8,678	9,320	9,518		
Florence	141,719	143,317	12,200	11,601	11,478	11,219	11,201	14,048	10,753	10,056	10,681	12,028	11,601		
Gadsden	454,564	475,670	40,989	42,727	39,466	38,576	39,497	45,425	35,766	34,174	33,261	41,810	40,964		
Gastonburg	64,900	63,269	5,768	5,679	5,657	5,418	4,772	5,278	5,250	5,216	4,426	5,691	6,244		
Greenville	99,530	105,177	7,931	8,748	8,083	7,767	8,336	9,078	7,710	6,998	7,861	7,861	8,431		
Guntersville	144,806	148,642	12,421	12,337	11,978	11,990	11,640	12,800	11,541	10,760	11,203	12,114	12,027		
Haleyville	18,302	16,848	1,477	1,654	1,508	1,395	1,347	1,437	1,363	1,391	1,422	1,484	1,567		
Hartselle	31,283	31,999	2,721	2,792	2,757	2,618	2,466	2,703	2,481	2,421	2,499	2,744	2,675		
Henry	35,719	38,696	3,114	3,496	3,343	3,104	3,107	3,515	3,051	2,706	2,563	3,030	3,417		
Houston	539,668	562,569	47,730	47,658	46,409	47,046	43,206	54,381	43,172	41,723	41,148	46,148	50,622		
Jackson	136,557	148,427	12,087	12,911	12,496	11,424	11,877	13,512	10,770	9,905	11,038	12,937	12,863		
Jefferson	4,275,224	4,525,935	370,859	397,800	362,490	372,786	375,633	451,113	360,663	344,785	339,154	397,009	413,375		
Lamar	37,965	37,813	3,220	3,339	2,844	4,053	3,113	3,529	3,171	2,943	2,622	3,111	3,679		
Lauderdale	362,932	395,991	32,801	35,084	32,751	32,222	34,931	43,791	31,080	28,893	29,494	34,246	36,311		
Lawrence	81,727	87,618	8,611	9,127	8,500	8,568	8,108	8,174	8,321	8,061	8,471	8,493	9,291		
Lee	346,847	372,747	29,497	33,052	32,981	30,111	33,370	38,504	29,733	26,702	28,930	31,966	34,070		
Limestone	161,436	176,609	14,735	16,262	15,523	14,405	13,844	16,882	14,122	13,113	12,833	15,345	15,815		
Lowndes	19,849	21,673	1,825	1,806	2,009	1,755	1,713	2,245	1,684	1,656	1,715	1,767	1,894		
Macon	45,109	44,359	3,758	4,078	4,107	3,987	3,471	3,825	3,660	3,585	3,450	4,190	4,399		
Madison	1,648,609	1,760,277	98,544	104,251	98,050	99,631	97,774	116,255	92,583	86,196	85,933	98,342	102,190		
Marengo	69,037	77,211	6,018	6,602	6,493	6,320	6,486	8,010	6,506	5,861	6,566	6,494	6,550		
Marion	95,738	103,142	8,643	9,068	8,761	8,440	9,045	10,490	8,719	7,996	8,029	8,771	9,439		
Marshall	339,130	360,254	33,088	34,721	32,104	30,431	32,457	35,696	28,692	27,914	30,032	33,632	36,912		
Mobile	1,796,156	1,834,633	156,470	158,651	152,915	155,753	149,219	181,838	148,465	133,802	133,503	160,371	147,615		
Monroe	102,680	105,448	9,287	10,423	9,747	9,331	11,148	12,110	8,744	8,358	8,308	8,308	8,736		
Montgomery	1,230,752	1,286,378	110,107	112,068	104,141	104,726	106,184	134,139	98,424	97,472	106,104	115,434	115,729		
Morgan	462,769	516,732	43,473	46,634	46,074	43,806	45,486	50,099	39,383	37,743	37,961	46,573	48,852		
Perry	26,774	31,954	2,933	3,007	2,970	2,687	2,914	3,167	2,873	2,822	2,997	3,097	3,216		
Pickens	41,978	41,648	3,612	3,903	3,476	3,370	3,539	3,664	3,098	2,766	3,114	3,765	3,758		
Pike	80,630	84,064	8,136	8,476	8,768	8,505	7,967	9,877	8,564	8,018	8,434	9,435	9,997		
Randolph	57,464	58,703	4,460	4,607	4,713	4,679	4,663	5,638	3,228	3,146	3,626	4,106	4,613		
Russell	121,133	123,448	10,406	9,799	9,564	10,370	9,852	11,913	9,159	8,825	9,795	11,198	10,959		
St. Clair	121,964	137,479	11,566	12,695	11,761	11,060	10,749	12,002	10,698	10,842	11,338	13,575	14,111		
Shelby	263,218	275,734	24,096	24,127	22,045	22,503	23,730	25,578	22,414	21,903	21,378	26,379	24,917		
Sumter	32,963	30,550	2,373	2,399	2,340	2,464	2,729	3,027	2,395	2,206	2,333	2,607	2,563		
Talladega	239,617	257,085	22,869	23,245	21,594	20,856	20,621	25,270	20,259	18,829	18,034	23,138	26,274		
Tallapoosa	127,374	133,242	10,981	12,044	11,846	11,668	11,389	12,630	10,179	9,695	10,076	12,019	13,030		
Tuscaloosa	631,256	674,640	56,544	59,536	56,543	59,957	56,662	67,996	55,207	50,901	50,104	60,255	67,136		
Walker	291,301	326,243	27,636	29,231	27,283	26,637	27,686	30,790	25,367	25,144	23,559	29,615	30,217		
Washington	21,606	20,665	1,943	1,692	1,978	1,645	1,622	1,556	1,642	1,529	1,243	1,693	1,906		
Wilcox	27,993	25,902	2,135	2,274	2,013	1,985	2,163	2,319	2,070	1,834	1,764	2,067	2,047		
Winston	71,276	80,233	6,712	7,107	6,868	6,807	7,040	7,960	6,217	5,623	6,125	6,466	6,790		
Statewide	971,276	1,074,377	85,594	93,420	89,725	92,867	86,731	130,326	85,214	79,753	88,873	108,176	114,605		

NOTE: Throughout this table, details do not necessarily add to totals due to rounding.

[1]Estimated total for calendar month based on adjustment of weekly data.

[2]Individual months may not add to annual totals due to late revisions in annual data.

[3]These data may not be reused in any manner without the express permission of Dodge/DRI Construction and Real Estate Information Service.

[4]End-of-month balance.

[5]Beginning January 1978, the Consumer Price Index consists of "All Urban Consumers." Prior to that date, it included only "Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers." Historical data will not be available due to the change in coverage. No "Energy" data are available prior to 1978, and "Housing" data prior to January 1978 are not comparable to the new "Housing" series due to a change in definition.

[6]These data were previously presented as the "Wholesale Price Index". The new title more accurately reflects the coverage of the data.

[7]Civilian labor force, unemployment, and total employment are adjusted by place of residence; and total nonagricultural employment and its components are by place of work. All monthly data are adjusted to a March benchmark of the previous year.

[8]Includes both inbound and outbound shipments by water moving through private facilities as well as through the Alabama State Docks; excludes tonnage for military installations.

[9]Gross gallons of gasoline as reported by wholesale distributors.

[10]These data may not be reused in any manner without the express permission of R.L. Polk and Company.

[11]Retail sales data represent sales at retail **which are subject to sales tax** as reported to the Alabama Department of Revenue under the definition of the Alabama Sales Tax Law. Total sales figures include taxable sales at retail by wholesalers and other nonretail firms as well as retail concerns. Sales at retail thus defined should not be confused with all sales (including nonretail sales) by retail concerns as reported in the Census of Retail Trade. **Monthly sales figures are preliminary and subject to revision on a continuing basis. Sales figures for the two latest months are normally low because they do not yet include data from late reporters. Retail sales historical data prior to 1984 are not available for the new series. The "Statewide" category in the "County" section provides sales figures which are not attributable to individual counties; it does not represent a state total.**

Per Capita Personal Income

State per capita personal income in 1985 ranged from $18,187 in Alaska and $18,089 in Connecticut to $9,187 in Mississippi, according to revised estimates of the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. The U.S. average was $13,867, compared with $13,114 in 1984. In the Southeast in 1985 per capita personal income was $11,989 — 14 percent ($1,878) below the national average and lowest among all the regions. Virginia is the Southern state with the highest per capita income, and Mississippi is the state with the lowest. Alabama ranked eighth. The order is as follows: 1) Virginia; 2) Florida; 3) Georgia; 4) North Carolina; 5) Louisiana; 6) Tennessee; 7) Kentucky; 8) Alabama; 9) South Carolina; 10) Arkansas; 11) West Virginia; 12) Mississippi.

In Alabama the increase in per capita income from 1982 to 1985 was more than the national average. Earnings increases were large in durable goods manufacturing, and in state and local government. Alabama did not see as much increase in the construction and private service-type industries as her sister Southern states saw. Alabama's per capita personal income in 1985 was $10,673, a 5.8 percent increase over the previous year and a 21.0 percent increase during the period 1982-85. Still that $10,673 represents only 77 percent of the national average.

For more information consult the August 1986 issue of the Commerce Department's monthly periodical *Survey of Current Business*.

Average Annual Pay

The average annual pay of workers covered by State and Federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs was $19,186 in 1985, a 4.5 percent increase over 1984, according to preliminary data released by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Alaska had the highest average annual pay of any state at $28,699. The District of Columbia came next with an average annual pay level of $26,160. South Dakota had the lowest average annual pay level at $13,987, with Mississippi and Maine having the next lowest.

Average annual pay varies widely by industry. Workers in the mining industry, which includes oil and gas extraction, average the highest wages nationwide. On the other end of the scale, retail trade workers—many of whom work part time—average the lowest average annual pay.

Alabama's average pay for workers in the private sector was $16,642 and was $18,516 for government workers. As is true nationwide, workers in the mining industry in Alabama had the highest average wages—$30,711—and retail trade workers had the lowest—only $9,920. Alabama's public and private sector wages average only 88.7 percent of the national figure. Wages improved 4.2 percent in Alabama between 1984 and 1985, but improved 4.4 percent nationally. Thus, not only were Alabama wages not as high as the national average, they also lost ground against the national average.

The Center for Business and Economic Research forecasts that wage rate increases in Alabama should be better in the last years of this decade. The mining industry will continue to be the highest-paying industry, but employees of the transportation, communications, and public utilities industries will also average high annual rates with big annual increases. The apparel industry, agricultural services, and farming will average the lowest wages. Specific forecasts of industry wages through 1990 are available in *Alabama Economic Outlook 1986: Detailed Forecast Tables*, Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama.

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Economy in Perspective:

Focus on Fayette County

Population Characteristics

Fayette County is in northwest Alabama surrounded to the south by Pickens and Tuscaloosa Counties, Marion County to the north and Lamar and Walker Counties to the west and east respectively. Fayette County is heavily wooded and noted for its beautiful natural terrain.

There are five towns in the county and parts of two more towns. Fayette is the largest town in the county with a 1984 population of 5,453, a net increase over the 1980 population of 166 people. Fayette is also the county seat. Berry is the next largest town with a 1984 population of 959, followed by Belk with 322 people. Both Berry and Belk have shown modest increases in population over the past four years. In addition Fayette County shares parts of Glen Allen and Winfield with Marion County.

A majority of the population in Fayette County is white according to the 1980 census and projections predict no large changes in racial composition. The 1980 census showed the county to be 87 percent white and 13 percent black. The white majority is projected to increase slowly over the next several decades while the black population declines slowly.

The population in Fayette County is relatively young. The 18-to-59-year-old age group comprises well over half the county's population. The largest age group in 1980 was 15-to-19-year-olds with nine percent of the population. Children and teen-agers will be an important group of the county's population within the foreseeable future. By 1990 there will be about 4,800 school-age young people, and another 1,200 infants and preschoolers. By contrast there will be about 3,000 people in Fayette County in 1990 who are 65 or older.

The educational level of Fayette County citizens is not as high as the state average. It is disappointing to report that of those persons 25 and older, 35 percent have only an elementary education, with elementary defined as zero to eight years of schooling. Another 21 percent have attended high school but did not graduate; 30 percent have had four years of high school; seven percent have had one to three years of college and another seven percent have graduated from college. Alabama averages 12 percent of its adults having a college degree. Although Fayette ranks low in regard to higher educational attainment, proximity to The University of Alabama and Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa and to Brewer State Junior College in Fayette has undoubtedly made it easier for some rural Fayette County citizens to acquire a postsecondary education.

Economic Characteristics

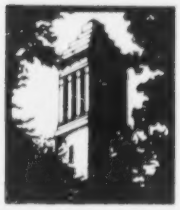
Fayette County's retail establishments are generally small with over half employing one to four persons. Although retail trade establishments outnumber manufacturing establishments, manufacturing employs 45 percent of the working population within Fayette County. Textile and apparel mills contribute to the county's economy, as do lumber mills and wood products mills. Mining also occurs in Fayette County.

Fayette County's economy depends on manufacturing much more heavily than is average for the state. Whereas 26 percent of Alabama's employed people work in manufacturing, 45 percent of Fayette County's do. The kinds of manufacturing industries in the county do not require employees with an advanced education or highly technical skills. Thus, 41 percent of Fayette County employees are working in jobs such as machine operator, assembler, inspector, cleaner, helper, or laborer. The state average for people in these classifications is only 24.5 percent. Just as Fayette County is disproportionately high in blue collar workers, it is also disproportionately low in white collar jobs. Fewer than average people in Fayette County work in managerial, professional, executive, technical, sales, or administrative support jobs.

Per capita income has risen steadily since 1979 from $6,265 to $9,018, a difference of $2,753 or 44 percent. That 44 percent increase seems less dramatic when one realizes that the increase for the entire state for that time period averaged 45.7 percent and for the nation 47.6 percent. While Fayette's 1984 per capita income was $9,018, the state average was $9,987, and the national average was $12,772.

The county has suffered terribly from high unemployment. While the state as a whole and the nation have seen hard times lessen in recent years, Fayette County's unemployment rate has remained in double digits. The counties surrounding Fayette, with the exception of Tuscaloosa, are having similar struggles with high unemployment. The manufacturing industries that have been the backbone of their economies have weakened considerably in recent years and these sparsely populated areas do not have enough diversification to be able to absorb so many hard blows.

—Ginger Shew and Annette Jones Watters



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